

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 04921

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, FR

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (EPG)

REF: (A) ROME 1840, (B) PARIS 4290, (C) PARIS 4130,
(D) PARIS 3688

1. SUMMARY: IN CONNECTION WITH EPG, FRENCH PRESS RAISES
ISSUES OF OFFSET AND NEW EUROPEAN NATIONAL ARMS INDUS-
TRIES. END SUMMARY.

2. ARTICLE BY USUALLY WELL-INFORMED POL/MIL JOURNALIST
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JACQUES ISNARD APPEARING IN FEBRUARY 18 EDITION OF LE

MONDE AND ENTITLED, "THE ROME MEETING ON ARMAMENT COOPERATION FORESAW A SYSTEM OF COMPENSATIONS AMONG EUROPEANS," MAY SHED FURTHER LIGHT ON CURRENT FRENCH MOD ATTITUDES TOWARD EPG. COPIES OF ISNARD ARTICLE POUCHED DEPARTMENT AND USNATO. AS WELL AS RECOUNTING SOME OF THE IMPRESSIONS WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED FROM PARIS, ISNARD ADDS SEVERAL NEW ASPECTS.

3. OFFSET: ISNARD SAYS THAT, OVER THE LONG RUN, EPG IS POINTED TOWARD ESTABLISHMENT OF AUTHENTIC "ARMAMENTS COMMUNITY" IN EUROPE, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A "COMPENSATORY MECHANISM" SIMILAR TO THE SYSTEM THE CAP PROVIDES WITHIN THE AREA OF EC AGRICULTURAL POLICY. HE GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE FEBRUARY ROME EPG MEETING DISCUSSED "THE NEED TO ESTABLISH GUARANTEES OR A SYSTEM OF PAYMENTS WHICH WOULD BALANCE THE EXCHANGE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT BETWEEN ARMAMENT PRODUCING COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITHOUT ARMS INDUSTRIES. BY THIS SYSTEM," HE CONTINUES, "THE COUNTRIES SELLING ARMAMENTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PURCHASE NON-MILITARY PRODUCTS FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES PURCHASING ARMAMENTS."

4. NEW ARMAMENT INDUSTRIES: ISNARD ALSO RAISES THE POSSIBILITY THAT EPG MEMBERS WHICH DO NOT NOW HAVE SIGNIFICANT ARMAMENT PRODUCTION FACILITIES MAY USE THE EPG AS A MECHANISM TO DEVELOP ARMS INDUSTRIES. HE SPECIFICALLY REFERS TO TURKEY, SAYING "WITHIN EUROPE, THERE IS A RISK OF INDUSTRIAL COMPETITION BETWEEN COUNTRIES ALREADY PRODUCING ARMAMENTS AND OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN CERTAIN TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITIES WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM A RELATIVE AUTONOMY OF (ARMS) SUPPLY. IN PARTICULAR, THE DESIRE OF TURKEY TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY COULD COMPLICATE DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE EUROPEAN GROUP."

5. COMMENT: SECTIONS D-3 AND D-4 OF THE EPG RESOLUTION TRANSMITTED IN PARA 4 OF REF A MIGHT BE READ AS REFLECTING INTEREST OF SOME EPG MEMBERS IN ESTABLISHING CONCEPT OF "OFFSET" WITHIN EPG. ISNARD'S ARTICLE IS FIRST SIGNAL WE HAVE SEEN IN PARIS TENDING TO CONFIRM THIS INTERPRE-
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TATION. THOSE OF US FAMILIAR WITH HISTORY OF US-FRG OFFSETS CAN ONLY SYMPATHIZE WITH POTENTIAL FOR DIVISIVENESS THAT OFFSET COULD POSE FOR EPG. MOREOVER, AS EUROPEANS EXPLORE FURTHER THE IMPLICATIONS OF ARMAMENT COOPERATION, THE CONCERN VOICED BY ISNARD ABOUT ENCOURAGING NEW -- AND POTENTIALLY COMPETITIVE -- EUROPEAN NATIONAL ARMAMENT INDUSTRIES IS BOUND TO PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN FRENCH CALCULATIONS.

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